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To the Rev. & R. Port

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*With the original
of the author*

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

COLUMBIAN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY,

AT THE

FIRST ANNUAL EXHIBITION,

JUNE 6th, 1834

BY GEORGE WATTERSTON.

WASHINGTON:

PRINTED BY WM. DAVIS JR.

1834.

AN
ADDRESS

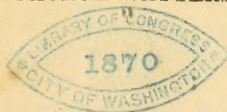
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WASHINGTON, JUNE 14, 1824.

DEAR SIR:

It affords us much pleasure, as a Committee appointed for the purpose, to communicate to you the unanimous vote of thanks of the Columbian Horticultural Society for the able and eloquent address delivered by you at their first annual exhibition on the 6th instant, and to request that you will favor the Society with a copy of that address for publication. When we consider the well known zeal you have manifested and the great interest you have taken in whatever concerns the prosperity of our infant society we are led to the sanguine hope that you will, in this respect, accede to its wishes.

Your friends and fellow members

W. HICKEY.
JAMES KEARNEY.
JNO. A. SMITH.

GEO. WATTERSTON, Esq.
*Corresponding Secretary of the
Columbian Horticultural Society.
Washington City.*

JULY 1st, 1834.

GENTLEMEN:

I feel grateful to the society for the expression of their favorable opinion of the humble production to which you refer, and cheerfully comply with your request in furnishing a copy for publication. In doing this, I must remark that, when called upon to prepare an address, I felt some hesitation and diffidence in undertaking to speak upon a subject with which I had so limited an acquaintance, though it had occasionally formed a part of my general studies and was at all times, one in which I took great pleasure. I therefore, depended more upon the indulgence of the society, and the facts I might acquire than upon my humble powers, or any knowledge I possessed. That it has met with the approbation of those to whom it was addressed, is, I need scarcely say, a source of sincere gratification; and that gratification will be augmented should it be so fortunate as to excite a more general attention to the art which it recommends or produce an increased fondness for its salutary and innocent pursuits.

Very resp'y

Your obedient servant,

GEO. WATTERSTON.

To Messrs. W. HICKEY,
JAS. KEARNEY,
J. A. SMITH.

ADDRESS.

MR. PRESIDENT,

AND GENTLEMEN OF THE

COLUMBIAN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY:

Sensible of my incompetency to discharge, in a suitable manner, the duty your partiality has assigned me, I feel great diffidence, in undertaking a task so little in accordance with my usual habits, and must, therefore, throw myself upon your generous indulgence, in the few rapid and desultory remarks, it has been made my duty, on this occasion, to address to you.

The productions of nature have always been to me a source of high gratification. From my earliest boyhood I have been accustomed to gaze upon whatever, in the vegetable kingdom, was beautiful or magnificent, with a feeling of rapt and enthusiastic delight it would be difficult to describe. But this love of nature—of the fair and exquisite productions of her hand—of the objects she has deckt with her rich and living pencil, is common to us all.

The poet and the painter may, indeed, feel a higher and holier extacy in the contemplation of her beaties; but no mind, however torpid or calous, can turn away from the splendid spectacle she exhibits when decorated in the varied mantle of Spring, the glowing tints of Summer, or the gorgeous drapery of Antumn, with indifference or apathy.

In the Horticulturist the pleasure arising from the mere contemplation of natural beauty, is increased by the consciousness of the utility of the objects of his culture and care. Hume has said that utility was beauty, and this is felt in all its force by him who devotes his labor and attention to the culture of those vegetable productions which nature has provided, with so liberal a hand, for the wants of man,

“Hence the poor are cloth’d, the hungry fed,
Health to himself and to his children bread.”

The first occupation of man was that of tilling the earth, and his first dwelling place, a garden. Eden was formed, and planted and ornamented by the Divine hand of the Creator, who placed it in the keeping of our original progenitor, and made it a region of blissfulness and beauty, where

“Flow’rs, worthy of Paradise which not nice art
In beds and curious knots, but nature boon
Pour’d forth profuse on hill, and dale, and plain,
Both where the morning sun first warmly smote
The open field, and where the unpierc’d shade
Imbrown’d the noon tide bow’rs.”

A fondness for this healthful occupation is felt by most men in all ranks of society. It is early developed and clings to us to the last period of life.

In childhood who has not experienced the pleasure of cultivating a spot in his fathers garden, and giving to it the form and image of that in which he loves to sport? It is an occupation which assimilates to the innocence of our infant years, and what is innocent is always pleasing. In manhood, this fondness is increased by the agreeable relaxation it affords—the beauty it unfolds and the benefit it confers; and in old age, when almost every other pleasure has faded away but that which springs from the consciousness of a well spent and virtuous life, it ceases not to diffuse its charm and to retain its attraction. Who of us, in the “sear and yellow leaf” does not delight to retire from the toils and agitations of the living world to the flower bordered walks, and vine covered bowers of a garden? Wearied and exhausted by the cares and business of life, it is refreshing to indulge in the pleasing reminiscences and delicious associations, which the sight of the flower we loved—the plant we cultivated—the shrub we cherished in our innocent childhood is calculated to call up. It is the love of nature which still clings to the heart, and which the wild conflicts of passion—the unbridled fury of political strife—the turmoils and cares and agonies of a heartless world, may deaden for a time, but cannot destroy. To the philosopher, the statesman, the hero and the poet, in all ages of the world, the cultivation of the soil—of the fruits and flowers of the earth, has been a source of rational enjoyment. And to all men, the pursuits of horticulture are peaceful and salutary, affording in-

structive amusement, and giving vigor to the body and a healthy action to the mind. "In my opinion" says Cicero, "no kind of occupation is more pregnant with happiness, not only as it is of singular utility to mankind in general, but as being attended with peculiar and very considerable pleasures."*

To none, however, is the garden a source of higher and purer enjoyment than to the female sex. Their sensibilities being more accute, they relish, with greater intensity the beauty which surrounds them, and which they cannot fail to behold in every border, and flower-woven arbour—in every plant and shrub, and tree over which the eye glances as it roams amidst the varied beauties of a well cultivated garden. To them the floral department is an object of especial attraction. The exquisite coloring, and the delicate and graceful forms of the productions of Flora are nicely adapted to the fine perception of beauty which exists in the female mind.—In what region of the world, in what condition of life, does not the love of flowers, prevail among females? In the lowly cottage, as well as the magnificent palace, it displays itself in the floral wreath, and the woodbine, and jessamine, and rose that diffuse their fragrance, and decorate the laticed window of the humble dwelling of innocence and poverty. In the populous city where the want of ground prevents the indulgence of their favorite propensity in its full extent.

* Cicero On old age.

the windows and parlours of their habitations are often found ornamented with the rose, the nigelle and the geranium. "But who, says Boursault, does not love flowers? They embellish our gardens; they give a more brilliant lustre to our festivals; they are the interpreters of our affections; they are the testimonials of our gratitude. We present them to those to whom we are under obligations; they are often necessary to the pomp of our religious ceremonies, and they seem to associate and mingle their perfumes with the purity of our prayers, and the homage which we address to the Almighty. Happy are those who love and cultivate them." There is, moreover, in the well cultivated garden, a placid beauty and a stillness and repose suited to the tranquillity of domestic life, and which, in the bustle and excitements of the world make us hope, like the poet Cowley, that we may be able "one day to retire to a small house and a large garden." There is much truth in the observation of Mrs. Hoffland, "our first most endearing and sacred associations are connected with gardens; our most simple and most refined perceptions of beauty are combined with them, and the very condition of our being, compels us to the cares, and rewards us with the pleasures attached to them." The Greeks appropriated their celestial gardens to the Gods; and the Mahometans, says Phillips, reserve their flowery lawns and umbrageous bowers for scenes of future bliss. To the fair sex may be attributed many of the improvements and beauties which are now so conspicuous in the ornament-

al or landscape garden —The wonderful hanging gardens of Babylon are said to owe their origin to the Queen of Nebuckadnezzar who to pacify her regrets at leaving the country in which she was born, and which appeared so beautiful by contrast, erected the famous terraces, covered with trees, and supporting rural seats, fountains, and banquetting halls which formed one of the wonders of the world. But, whatever, may have been the influence exercised by woman in the formation and improvement of the gardens of antiquity, it is certain that there is no department of nature so appropriate to the female hand as the cultivation of flowers. "Flowers seem intended for the embellishment of the fair and for the ornament of the spot where they tread. Their sweet perfumes have such influence over all our sensations that in the midst of flowering shrubs the most acute grief generally gives way to the sweetest melancholy. When our home or domestic companions are encompassed by the shrubbery our situation then approaches nearest to a terrestrial paradise."* There is perhaps, no object in nature more pleasing than a young and beautiful woman, blooming in innocence and loveliness seen amidst a parterre of flowers, herself the fairest, sustaining the drooping lily, or administering to the nourishment of the expanding beauties of the rose.

" Much I love

To see the fair one bind the straggling pink,
Cheer the sweet rose, the lupin, and the stock,

* Phillips' *Silva*.

And lend a staff to the still gadding pea;
 Ye fair it well becomes you. Better thus
 Cheat time away than at the crowded rout,
 Rustling in silk, in a small room close pent,
 And heated 'e'en to fusion ; made to breathe
 A rank, contagious air, and fret at whist
 Or sit aside to sneer and whisper scandal." CRABBE.

Horticulture is one of the first indications of civilization. In the origin of society mankind exist on the products of the chase, and their first employment is that of the hunter. The pastoral life next succeeds; the cultivation of the soil is then resorted to, and the earth pours into the lap of industry all that the wants and necessities of man require. Civilization, and its concomitants, luxury & refinement, are introduced, and gardening then rises to the dignity of a fine art. Horticulture in its restricted sense, was among the earliest occupations of man, and is almost co-eval with the world. It was not till society had reached a high degree of polish and refinement that the beautiful art of landscape gardening became an object of attention and study. Lord Bacon has correctly remarked that "when ages grow to civility and elegance men come to build stately, sooner than to garden finely; as if gardening were the greater perfection." Landscape gardening, is not so much an imitative art, as "nature itself ornamented." It has of late been brought to a high degree of perfection in England, where it continues to be patronised and promoted by the wealth and taste of the nation. It has been gradually advancing from its first rude beginnings to the high excellence to which it has now attained ;

from the first attempt to ornament nature in the gardens of Alcinous as described by Homer, to the splendid condition of the art now existing in Europe. In the age of Homer, even the conception of an ornamental garden must have been humble and limited, when the rich imagination of the Father of Epic poetry, could not body forth a more perfect specimen of the art than the one he has left us. The garden of Alcinous was but an orchard and kitchen garden, which is thus described.

Four acres was the allotted space of ground
 Fenc'd with a green enclosure all around
 Tall thriving trees confessed the fruitful mould
 The reddening apple ripens into gold.
 Here the blue fig with luscious juice o'er flows ;
 With deeper red the full pomegranate glows ;
 The branch here bends beneath the weighty pear,
 The verdant olives flourish round the year,
 Beds of all various kinds, forever green,
 In beauteous order terminate the scene.

As society advanced in refinement and luxury, a taste for ornamental gardening was gradually developed, cultivated and displayed, among the Greeks, the Romans, the Persians, and the Chinese. But it was not till the commencement of the 18th century, that this art began to claim the attention of men of taste and wealth in Europe. The improvements which have been made in it, have been properly attributed to the natural progress of art and refinement, aided by descriptions of Chinese gardens and the rich and vivid delineations of natural scenery abounding in the ancient and modern poets. The paradise of Milton, the

seasons of Thompson, Tasso's garden of Armida, the Vale of Tempe, and the Vaucluse of Petrarch, have all been said to furnish hints and suggest improvements in what Walpole terms the art of "creating Landscape." The Italian style of gardening prevailed for many years in Europe. It consisted of terraces of masonry, flights of steps, arcades, grottos, clipp'd hedges, niches, and recesses for statues. To this succeeded the Dutch style which consisted of sloped grass terraces, land and water thrown into various forms, adorned with trees in pots or planted alternately, and regularly clipped. Le Notre, finally arose who planned and executed the famous gardens of Versailles. His designs are charged with having been too puerile and artificial to please the refined taste of the *élegantie formarum spectator*. Dufresnoy followed Le Notre, and possessing a better taste, endeavoured to introduce a more picturesque and natural style into ornamental gardening. This was improved by Kent who first introduced the modern style into England; and Kent was, succeeded in this beautiful art. by Wright, Brown, and Repton as professors; and by Southcoat, Hamilton, Shenstone, Littleton and Pitt, as proprietors and amateurs.

But Horticulture as a useful art comes more peculiarly within the province of this society

To this branch belongs the cultivation of fruits, flowers and esculent vegetables, and it embraces the kitchen garden, orchard, nursery, rosery, greenhouse, and botanical and medical garden. Long experience and the progress of science have ren-

dered these different departments productive of great advantage to mankind. For many ages men cultivated the soil without the light of science, and pursued the mode adopted by those who preceded them, without inquiring into the principles upon which their practical operations were founded. Natural History, Botany, and Chemistry were but little studied in reference to horticulture, and but seldom resorted to for the purpose of extending the benefits and multiplying the beauties of the garden, or developing the principles of vegetable life. The rapid improvements made in botany, vegetable physiology and chemistry, within a few centuries, have been such as greatly to extend the sphere of Horticultural science, by rendering the theory more intelligible, and its practice more certain and delightful. The ancients have left but little behind them, in the beautiful science of botany, that is worthy of preservation. They had no system, and their descriptions of plants are vague and unsatisfactory. The labors of Theophrastus, Dioscorides and Pliny, are entirely useless at the present day; and it was not till the appearance of that extraordinary man, Linnæus, that botany could be properly ranked among the sciences. The vast accession of knowledge in the vegetable kingdom which has been the consequence of his labors and devotion to science, may be estimated from the following brief statement of the additions which have been made, at different periods of the world, to the catalogue of plants. Homer mentions but 30, the Bible 71, Hippocrates 274, Theophrastus 500, Dias-

corides 700, and Pliny 1000 plants. About seventeen centuries after the age of the latter, Linnæus appeared and enlarged this meagre catalogue to between 11 and 12,000. Since his time the nomenclature has been swelled to the almost incredible magnitude of 150,000 plants. What an immense addition to the comfort, gratification and health of mankind! What light and usefulness has not the science of Botany blended with the labors of the Horticulturist! But it is a science, which, distinct from the deep and rational gratification it affords, is almost indispensable to the gardener, especially that branch of it which imparts a knowledge of the physiology, the structure and functions of plants. As a source of enjoyment to the cultivated mind, independently of its great usefulness, I give the testimony of one of the most distinguished Botanists of this country. "It has been for many years," says Dr. Elliott, of South Carolina, the occupation of my leisure moments, and it is a merited tribute to say that it has lightened for me many a heavy and smoothed many a rugged hour; that beguiled by its charms, I have found no road rough or difficult, no journey tedious, no country desolate or barren. In solitude never solitary, in a desert never without employment, I have found it a relief from the languor of idleness, the pressure of business and the unavoidable calamities of life." The experience of every Botanist will confirm the truth of this eloquent description.—To him indeed

"The meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that oft lie too deep for tears."

It has been justly remarked that a knowledge of botany "gives as it were an additional eye to those

who walk either amongst the native beauties of the field or the exotic charms of the shrubbery; for however elegant, however admirable, however diversified the structure of vegetables may be, it does not strike the eye of those who are ignorant of their parts enough to interest them; because they do not even know where to look, or the use of what they look at. They have no conception of that assemblage and chain of relations and combinations which overwhelm with their wonders the mind of the observer who has studied this part of the creation and who would find more beauties in the little inflated flower of the *Arbutus* than the indolent observer can perceive in the gay amaryllis of Buenos Ayres, or than the indifferent spectator will see in the matchless elegance of the *passiflora* whose stars so splendidly illuminate the Brazilian forests.* In the cultivated garden, as well as in the trackless wilds of nature, there is not

“A tree

A plant, a leaf, a blossom but contains

A folio volume. We may read and read,

And read again, and still find something new

Something to please, and something to instruct.”

In no department of nature have the imagination and taste of that Matchless Being who created the Universe, been so signally displayed as in the vegetable kingdom. Each plant and flower has been designed, and formed and colored with the most exquisite and beautiful fancy, and with a view to the gratification and benefit of the animal creation. Their multiplicity and endless variety, their singu-

* Phillips' *Silva Florifera*.

lar structure, and admirable adaptation to the wants of organic beings, display the wisdom, beneficence and elegance of the Divine Mind.

“Whose breath perfumes them and whose pencil paints.”

I shall not, on this occasion, enter into the philosophy of vegetation. Its wonders I leave to a more skilful hand, to whom we have delegated this pleasing task;† but I must be permitted to mention a few facts illustrative of the operations of vegetable nature in the production of liquids and substances similar to those of the Bee, the Cow the Sheep &c. The *Myrica Pennsylvanica* is said to yield an annual supply of vegetable *war*—the Palo de Vaca of South America furnishes an abundance of real *milk*—a tree in Guayaquil produces a fine *wool*—one in China secretes a tallow like *fat*—one in the West Indies an exquisite *marrow*, and another in Buenos Ayres becomes a vegetable fountain, and yields a copious effusion of *pure water*. Vegetables have also a strong affinity to the mineral kingdom; for they form carbon, and some contain copper, sulphur, iron and gold. In regions where the rays of the sun cannot penetrate, the wise providence of God has produced the *Fungus Rhizomorpha* “which vegetates in *dark mines* far from the light of day. In the coal mines near Dresden it gives those places the air of an enchanted castle. The roofs, walls and pillars are entirely covered with them; *their beautiful light almost dazzling the eye*.”* Others again live on air alone, as the *Epidendron, flos aris*; famous

Ed. Phil. Journal, 14th vol.

† W. Rich, Lecturer on Botany and vegetable Physiology.

for the beauty of its flowers and the sweetness of its perfume. The Chinese suspend it round the ceiling of their rooms"* where it forms a living festoon, breathing fragrance and charming the eye by the splendor of its beauty.

In the wonderful productiveness of vegetable nature, the goodness and wisdom of the Benevolent Creator are not less displayed than in its surprising organization and beauty. No conceivable increase of the human species or of animal life can ever surpass the continued supply of vegetable food which the Beneficent Hand of God has spread exuberantly over the earth for the sustenance and comfort of his creatures. Its whole bosom teems with the productive principle of vegetation. A single tree will produce a large forest, and seeds blown by the winds and carried by the birds of the air to regions where they had never before vegetated, soon flourish, become attached to the soil and produce and re-produce to infinity. Seeds will lie inert for centuries, and when buried in the ground too deep for vegetation will remain untouched by decay, till brought nearer the surface. A bulbous root was found a few years ago, in the hand of an Egyptian mummy, and after the lapse of twenty centuries, was again restored to its parent earth, where it once more vegetated and became a beautiful plant.

But it is with the improbability of vegetable nature that this society has the most immediate con-

Bull. Univ. 1829.

cern. In this principle it greatly transcends all organic and inorganic matter. By culture this faculty is developed and enlarged to an almost infinite extent. Many of the productions of the vegetable kingdom have been rendered by culture not only very abundant and beautiful, but even their character has been changed. To the *sloe* we are indebted for the fine *plum*; the common crab is the stock from which has sprung the various species of the delicious *apple*, and the *sweet brier* is said to be the parent of all the beautiful and almost endless varieties of the *rose*. In an uncultivated state many of the nutritious esculent vegetables which constitute a portion of the regular food of civilized man, such as the carrot, parsnip, &c. are poisonous; Culture has given them new properties, and a wonderful enlargement. "Man, says Loudon, improving on nature produces cabbages and turnips of half a hundred weight, and apples of one pound and a half," Strawberries have been produced seven inches in circumference, an apple that has measured fifteen inches round—a bunch of grapes that has weighed fifteen pounds, and a mushroom upwards of a foot in diameter.

Such is the improvability of vegetable nature which points out to man the necessity of labor and the advantage of cultivation. But to render cultivation effectual, Horticulture as a science requires, in addition to Botany, the aid and co-operation of other branches, of knowledge among which the most important are Chemistry, Mineralogy, Rural Architecture, and Entomology. The scientific gar-

dener should be acquainted with the various materials, or substances of which the earth that he tills is composed, that he may, with greater certainty and benefit know how to adapt the plant to its most congenial soil, and the soil to the plant. A knowledge of the properties of compost, the manner in which lands are enriched, the causes of their fertility, the peculiar character of each soil, the effect and operation of different manures on vegetation &c., are indispensable to the skilful horticulturist. Rural architecture, hydraulics, and mechanics form no inconsiderable portion of the necessary information of the landscape gardener. Indeed

“Ce noble emploi demandé un artiste qui pense

Prodigue de genie, mais non pas de depense.” Delille.

But to the practical horticulturist no branch of physical science is more useful and important than Entomology. Small as the objects may be of which it treats and insignificant as it may seem to the generality of mankind, it is, nevertheless, highly interesting in itself, and of great and obvious utility to the gardener. The matchless wisdom and perfection of God are not less strikingly manifested in the formation of this class of animated beings than in the other portions of his animal kingdom. The fairy and gorgeous butterfly, and the brilliant beetle are as exquisitely imagined and as elaborately executed as the most splendid floral production of his hand. To these “valued minatures, nature has given the most delicate touch and highest finish of her pencil.

Numbers are armed with a glittering mail like burnished gold. in others is the dazzling radiance of polished gems, some are decked with what looks like liquid drops, or plates of gold and silver, some vie with flowers in the delicacy and variety of their colors, others in the texture of their wings, and others in the rich cottony down that clothes them.”* Their instinct and magical transformations excite our admiration and astonishment. In the wonderful metamorphosis of the insect tribe, passing from the inert mass, the egg, to the perfect animal, through all their different stages of existence, we cannot fail to recognize an analogy between these physical changes and that which our immortal spirits are destined to undergo; and I cordially concur, with an able writer on this subject,† in the belief “that one of the great purposes of the Deity in creating his insect kingdom was to excite this sentiment, (a belief in the resurrection) in the human heart, and to raise by it the contemplative mind to look forward to a possible revival from the tomb, as the butterfly from its sepulchral chrysalis.”

The poetical imagination and exquisite taste of the ancient Greeks led them, without any knowledge of christian revelation, to embody the human soul under the form of a butterfly, and a representation of this insect was engraved on their head stones and tombs to denote that the spirit or soul.

*Kirby and Spence, Entom. vol 1.

†S. Turner's Sacred History.

Psyche, would reappear in a new form and state of being.

“Noi siam vermi
Nati a formar l'angelica farfalla.”

But however admirable and beautiful the insect tribe may be, their habits and history must be studied by the gardener mainly for the purpose of acquiring that knowledge which will enable him to render them less noxious and destructive to the objects of his care, attention and labor. Insects exist almost exclusively on the productions of the vegetable kingdom; every leaf, blossom, fruit and plant is their food—neither root trunk nor branch is exempt from their inroads; they spread from pole to pole, and are found wherever a vegetable exists to afford them nourishment, and enable them to propagate their species. Their ravages are sometimes extensive and desolating, and their most ordinary, though necessary operations, injurious to vegetable life. It is important therefore, to study their economy, to be the better able to devise remedies for the injuries they commit. Entomology has already been of considerable advantage, in this particular, both to agriculture and gardening, and if this branch of natural history be pursued, with this view, there is every reason to expect that much additional benefit will be the result. He who shall discover from a knowledge of their habits and economy, the best mode of exterminating those noxious insects, or of preventing their destructive ravages, will render an inestimable

service to horticulture, and deserve the lasting gratitude of his country,

Such are the diversified intellectual acquirements, and the various branches of knowledge which the science of horticulture requires. The establishment of this and other kindred societies will, I think, be the means of encouraging the prosecution of these auxilliary studies, and of greatly promoting the useful objects of horticulture. "More real useful improvements it is said, "have been made in gardening since the formation of the London Horticultural Society than have been made in China within the last thousand years." The beneficial effects of these institutions have been felt wherever they have been formed. They encourage industry, create a new spirit of horticultural enterprize, lead to new inquiries, to diversified and often useful experiments, to more skilful modes of cultivation, and are liberal and social in their tendencies. Among the earliest institutions of this sort was the Florists Society in Edinburg formed in 1803, which afterwards took and now retains the title of the Caladonian Horticultural Society. This was followed by the London Horticultural Society established in 1805, and in 1826 a similar institution was formed in Paris. The example of these countries has been imitated in the United States, and Horticultural societies now exist in Boston, New York, Albany, Geneva, Philadelphia, Maryland and South Carolina.

Their productive effects may be partially estimated from the fact that a few years ago in the

vicinity of London, 14,000 acres of land were occupied as fruit and kitchen gardens, the annual produce of which sold for four millions of dollars. Near Edinburg five hundred acres are thus appropriated, the products of which yield annually \$100,000. The consequence of the establishment of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, it is said, in an eloquent and sensible address of one of its members, has been to produce a "decided improvement in the grounds of men of wealth and leisure, and in the gardens and court-yards of the middling class of citizens; and even the home of the laboring poor has, in not a few instances, acquired an additional point of interest to attract him from the haunts of dissipation; his leisure hours are pleasantly occupied; his mind expanded, and his heart warmed and softened."*

Our Institution is of recent origin; but from its peculiar location, we have every reason to indulge the hope that it will not fall behind its fellow laborers in usefulness, and that its more immediate effect will be a sensible improvement in the fruits and esculent vegetables of our climate. In the centre of our vast republic, at the seat of the Federal Government, communicating through its public agents, with all parts of the globe, the location of this society is certainly unequalled in this country. For the exercise of the ornamental branch of the art which this institution proposes to encourage, our position also possesses great capabil-

*Dr. Wards Address.

ities. Nature has done much, in the beautiful outline and splendid landscape scenery, she has formed within the limits of our District. It requires but the addition of art, backed by wealth, to render our territory, so far as it concerns mere physical beauty, the Paradise of America; and this, I expect soon to see both publicly and privately employed to give embellishment, variety and splendor to the striking natural beauties by which we are surrounded. The effect of horticultural taste and enterprise is perhaps no where more happily illustrated than in the miniature garden of our President. It exhibits all the variety, and skilful arrangement that good taste could bestow, and it is to be regretted that he had not had a wider field, and better opportunities for its display. His laudible example will, I hope, be imitated by others till a taste for horticulture shall be diffused among all classes of the community whose circumstances will enable them to appropriate a portion of their time, labor, and means to the improvement and embellishment of their grounds, however small.

In England this taste is so widely extended and so fondly cherished, that scarcely an humble cottage is seen without its little garden spot, and its white washed walls, decorated with the honey suckle, woodbine and other floral ornaments. And

"Where around the Cots romantic glade are seen,
The blossom'd beanfield and the sloping green."

Should this society succeed in infusing a taste for horticulture as an elegant art, it does not require great exercise of imagination to conceive the splend-

id pictoriae scene that this District would present in the course of half a century. The beautiful heights that surround our city—their verdant and sunny slopes—the majestic river, rolling at their base—the undulating outline—the gorgeous autumnal foliage of its woods, and the other capabilities it possesses, may be converted, by the hand of taste, into a scene on which the eye will delight to gaze, as on one created by the power of enchantment. But for myself, I know no application of this branch of the art, more delightful than to the decoration of the last resting places of the dead. The romantic garden of graves of Pere la Chaise has become an object of beauty, as well as of deep interest, to all who visit the Capital of France, from the embellishments it has received from horticultural taste. May we not flatter ourselves that something like this will yet be done in the Burial ground of our city, and that aided by Congress, and enlarged, arranged and ornamented under the direction of this society, it will present a spectacle of picturesque and living beauty, amid the melancholy mementos of the mouldering dead, that no one can contemplate without the deepest interest and admiration. It has been beautifully said by the Vice President of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, in speaking of the mount Auburn cemetery.*

“The weeping Willow, waving its graceful drapery over the monumental marble and the sombre foliage of the Cypress should shade it, the undying daisy should mingle its bright and glowing tints with the native laurels of our forests. It is there I would de-

* Z. Cook, Jr.

sire to see the taste of the florist manifested in the collection and arrangement of beautiful and fragrant flowers that in their budding and bloom and decay they should be the silent and expressive teachers of morality, and remind us that, although like the flowers of Autumn, the race of man is fading from off the earth, yet like them his root will not perish in the ground, but will rise again in a renewed existence, to shed the sweet influence of a useful life, in gardens of unfading beauty." Yes, cold and torpid must be the heart of him who could stroll amid such a scene and be insensible to the melancholly charm which the fragrance he inhales, the beauty he beholds, and the thought of those who are mouldering into dust at his feet are calculated to infuse. Horticulture can spread its beauties over the solemn mansions of the dead, as well as amid the splendid dwellings of the living—can administer to the indulgence of buried affection, as well as to the joyous feelings of requited love. But we are indebted to horticulture for most of comforts as well as many of the pleasures of life. We owe to this art the culture of the most beautiful ornamental trees and shrubs, the choicest variety of fruits—the finest kind of flowers, and the most nutritious and wholesome species of vegetables. Even agriculture is indebted to the garden for many of its most valuable products. There, says, Poiteau, "like the young Hercules, she first tried her powers, and prepared, like him to overrun the world which she speedily cleared of monsters, and bestowed upon man the laws of civilization,"

Horticulture administers not only to our wants and pleasures, but it also gives a high moral tone to our feelings by habituating the mind to the tranquillity and contentment of domestic life, and the quiet pleasures of rural occupation. We are carried from the contemplation of the exquisite specimens of the taste and wisdom of the Creator which we are laboring to rear, to the Creator himself. Our admiration becomes more enthusiastic and our devotion more ardent. "All the beautiful thoughts and sentiments," says Sharon Turner "which poetry has breathed in every age in praise of verdant or floral nature and of rural life, are the expressed homage of the heart to the charms and utilities of the vegetable creation and are so many undesigned but implied encomiums on its invisible author for planning and ordaining it."

"Forth in the pleasing Spring

Thy beauty walks; thy tenderness and love.—

Wide flush the fields; the softening air is balm

And every sense and every heart is joy."

The vegetable kindom is profuse with the manifestations of the goodness, liberality and kindness of the Deity towards man. "It expands, says the eloquent writer, I have just quoted,* 'every where before us an immense portraiture of the Divine mind in its contriving skill, profuse imagination, conceiving genius and exquisite taste; as well as its interesting qualities of the most gracious benignity and the most benevolent munificence. The various flowers we behold awaken these sentiments within

* Turner's Sacred Hist.

us, and compel our reason to make these perceptions and this inference. They are the annual heralds and ever returning pledges to us of his continuing beneficence, of his desire to please and to benefit us, and therefore of his parental and intellectual amiabilities. The thunder—the pestilence and the tempest awe and humble us into dismaying recollections of his tremendous omnipotence, and possible visitations, and of our total inability to resist or avert them; but the beauty and benefactions of his vegetable creations—the flowers and the forests more especially remind and assures us of his unforgetting care, of his condescending sympathy, of his paternal attentions and of the same affectionate benignity, still actuating his mind which must have influenced it to design and execute such lovely and benevolent productions that display the minutest thought, most elaborate compositions, and so much personal kindness.” It is in the garden that we can see the wisdom and tenderness, and beneficence of the Benevolent Creator, and it is there that our gratitude and devotion would lead us to exclaim, with the poet of night,

“O how Omnipotence

Is lost in love! Thou great *Philanthropist*,

Father of angels, but the *Friend of Man*.”

Look around you and behold the spectacle of beauty and usefulness which nature, aided by the hand of industry and art, has spread before you. This festival of flowers—this banquet of delights this “beauty to the eye and pleasure to the sense,” will, I trust, be annually enjoyed by those who prefer the happiness which springs from the refresh-

ing and salutary pursuits of Horticulture to the feverish and exiting agitations of artificial life. We invite, then, all both male and female, to unite with us in the pleasing and useful enterprise in which we have engaged—to join us in our efforts to spread a taste for the beauties of nature, and infuse a relish for a pursuit which is so replete with innocence and happiness—and which so largely contributes to the utility, and comfort, and enjoyment of mankind.

DESCRIPTION
OF THE FIRST ANNUAL
EXHIBITION.

The first annual Exhibition of the Columbian Horticultural Society was held in the City Hall, on the 5th and 6th of June. A large and splendid collection of green-house plants, and a great variety of garden flowers, vegetables, and fruits, were brought from the different parts of the District to the Hall of exhibition. The season having been very unfavorable, it was apprehended that the exhibition would disappoint public expectation; but such were the zeal and enthusiasm of the horticulturist, florists, and others of the District, that it presented, even on the first day, a spectacle of beauty and splendor that surprised all who saw it, and that was said to be unsurpassed, in variety and profusion, by any thing of the kind ever before seen in this country. The committee, to whom its superintendence was assigned, displayed great taste in its arrangement by the admirable grouping and disposition of the plants, and assisted by several ladies of the City and its vicinity, who kindly lent their aid on the occasion, succeeded in rendering it a scene of enchantment, where the eye was feasted with beauty, the scent regaled by the delicious fragrance of the richest flowers, and the ear charmed by the melody of birds, placed amid the verdant foliage and golden fruit of the orange and citron trees, by the soft and pensive tones of the Eolian Harp, and the fine music of the Marine band. The green-house plants and the numerous garden flowers were arranged on pyramids, in different parts of the spacious hall and along the walls of the apartment, leaving alleys, bordered by the most rare and beautiful productions of Flora, through which the visiter passed to gaze on the beauties and inhale the fragrance that breathed around him. Every one

that entered was struck by the novelty and splendor of the fairy scene, and crowds rushed to behold it before it should disappear. Two small floral pyramids were constructed and arranged in the most tasteful manner, by several ladies of the District, consisting of at least 400 varieties of the choicest and most beautiful garden flowers, chiefly from the parterre of Mrs. Bomford and Mr. J. Pierce, and supporting a magnificent silver vase crowned with flowers. Glass globes, surmounted with bouquets of roses, lilies, pinks, etc. and containing gold fish, sporting and glittering in their native element, were placed in different parts of the hall, and seemed to swim amid a flood of fragrance. At night the spectacle was, if possible, still more splendid and enchanting. The lights, interspersed among the shrubs, tropical fruit trees, and groups of flowers, gave additional brilliancy and beauty to the almost magical scene. During the exhibition, on both days, the hall was crowded by visitors who flocked to witness this festival of Flora, and all seemed delighted at the first effort of the society, which so far surpassed their expectations, and gave so fair a promise of future excellence and utility. The scene appeared to inspire a feeling of harmony and social affection; and every thing calculated to disturb or agitate was charmed into silence, or banished from the mind, by the tranquillizing and splendid spectacle thus exhibited. The committee of arrangements are entitled to high praise for their assiduity and for the taste and untiring zeal they displayed in making the exhibition so attractive and beautiful. The exhibition was closed on Friday evening, the 6th, by an Address from George Watterston, Esq. Cor. Sec., to whom the task had been assigned by the unanimous voice of the society, and who acquitted himself in a manner highly satisfactory to his fellow members, and pleasing to the numerous and respectable assemblage of persons present on the occasion. The orator presented an interesting view of the history and science of Horticulture, the salutary and peaceful tendencies of its pursuits, and the charms which it receives from female industry and taste. He took a review of the antiquity and gradual progress of this interesting science, both in its ornamental and useful branches of those parts of knowledge necessary to a correct understanding and development of its principles and practice, and to the successful prosecution of its labors. He dwelt upon

the useful effects of cultivation on vegetable nature; on the richness and abundance with which Divine Providence has blessed mankind, in bestowing upon him such inexhaustible stores of vegetable wealth. The munificence and wisdom of the Deity in its formation, its diversity, its beauty; and preserving and handing, down from age to age, its treasures for the use of man. He explained the origin, history, and improving nature, of Horticultural societies in Europe and America, and the beneficial effects anticipated for the District of Columbia from the establishment of the Columbian Horticultural Society, whose exertions were destined to improve the moral and religious character of its inhabitants, and add to the happiness of the social and domestic circle. It were impracticable, in a short sketch, to embrace even an outline of the address: suffice it to say, that it was heard with deep interest, and responded to by universal applause.

At the hour named for the delivery of the address, 8 o'clock, the room, though very spacious, was filled to overflowing, and the orator had the satisfaction to know that his learned and appropriate discourse was listened to by a delighted audience, combining a full share of the beauty, fashion, and talent, that usually graces and enlightens the capital of the nation when congress is in session.

It was a matter of regret that the Society could not comply with the earnest request of the citizens, by continuing the exhibition during the whole of Saturday. The room being required for the accommodation of the newly elected City Council on the Monday following, it was necessary that the plants should be removed prior to that day, and therefore the Society were constrained to close the exhibition on Friday, to the regret of many who had not had an opportunity of visiting it.









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